

1/4 1948 + Russia

PKSEN

Phed S. SYMINGTON

ag 3-1-1

DIRKSEN CLASHES WITH SYMINGTON ON U.S. DEFENSES

Charges Missourian 'Didn't Read Fine Print' in Gen. Power's Warning.

By JAMES DEAKIN
A Washington Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 23—Senators Stuart Symington (Dem.), Missouri, and Everett M. Dirksen (Rep.), Illinois, clashed again today on the adequacy of United States defenses. Symington repeated his charge that the Administration is misleading the people.

Dirksen said Symington ignored "the fine print" in quoting Gen. Thomas Power, head of the Strategic Air Command, as saying that the Russians could destroy 95 per cent of this country's retaliatory power under certain circumstances.

The Senate Republican leader said that he had "very, very grave doubts" that the current charges and counter-charges over national security add to public confidence. He referred to a Symington speech last Friday, quoting Gen. Power as saying that the Soviets could wipe out 95 per cent of all United States retaliatory forces if they had 150 intercontinental ballistic missiles and 150 intermediate range missiles and if S.A.C. were not put on continuous airborne alert.

"Now, that's not all Gen. Power said," Dirksen told the Senate in a loud voice, "don't escape the fine print."

He quoted Power as saying that this estimate was "a mathematical calculation." Dirksen said also an Air Force spokesman had said that Power's view was based "on a hypothetical set of circumstances."

"Now, if that's a fact, I'll eat it," Dirksen declared. "I want no equivocal facts, I want no qualified facts, because they are not facts."

In a statement of "reply," issued before Dirksen began his remarks, Symington referred to testimony last month by Secretary of Defense Thomas S. Gates Jr.

At that time, Gates indicated a change in emphasis in the analysis of intelligence data from Soviet capabilities to what are believed to be Soviet intentions.

Symington said that Gates concluded that as a result of this change, "the great divergence (in I.C.B.M.s) based on figures testified to in years past, narrows."

"A few days later," the Secretary of the Air Force even went so far as to say that the new method had adjusted the picture to such an extent that he wasn't sure but what the I.C.B.M. gap may have been eliminated altogether," Symington continued.

"Ten days after the statement by the Secretary of Defense, however, the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, in a closed secret session, told the Senate exactly the reverse."

"At that time, the director said the new intelligence data showed that the number of long-range ballistic missiles the Soviets were expected to have ready to be launched against the United States was, in ratios, greater than the estimate of what they were expected to have based on last year's intelligence data."

"In fact, at mid-1960, mid-1961 and mid-1962, the new estimates of the Soviet ratios in ready-to-launch capability average between 20 per cent and 50 per cent more than the estimates of last year."

"Based on this year's figures, and this year's method of analysis, the Soviets are expected to have a capability greater than the 3 to 1 lead Secretary (Neil H.) McElroy forecast last year."

"Therefore, the recent public statements and implications of this Administration on this matter . . . were wrong."

Accordingly, Symington said, "I stated that the Administration was misleading the American people with respect to this vital matter."

"There has been no correction of the erroneous statement made last month. . . . Therefore, my statement stands. The American people are being misled."

Symington suggested that the Eisenhower Administration make public its current estimate on the missile ratio between this country and Russia, as "a simple way to clear up this confusion."

The Administration, he said, "should publish now what it is estimated the Soviets will have capability of launching against this country, compared with our like capability, ratios on percentages, for mid-1960, mid-1961 and mid-1962."

"In that way, without divulging any classified information, and without telling any possible enemy anything he doesn't already know, the American people would have the truth."

Dirksen, who has become the Administration's chief defender in Congress in the defense controversy, told the Senate he "freely concedes" that Symington "speaks with some authority" on defense matters. But he said, he has confidence in President Eisenhower's assessment of United States capabilities.

Dirksen said the President "stood on solid ground" in his evaluation of the defense situation. Mr. Eisenhower's statements on defense in his speech last Sunday, before he left on his South American trip, had "a tonic effect on the country," he asserted.

"If there were pockets of anxiety, I believe they were allayed," he said.